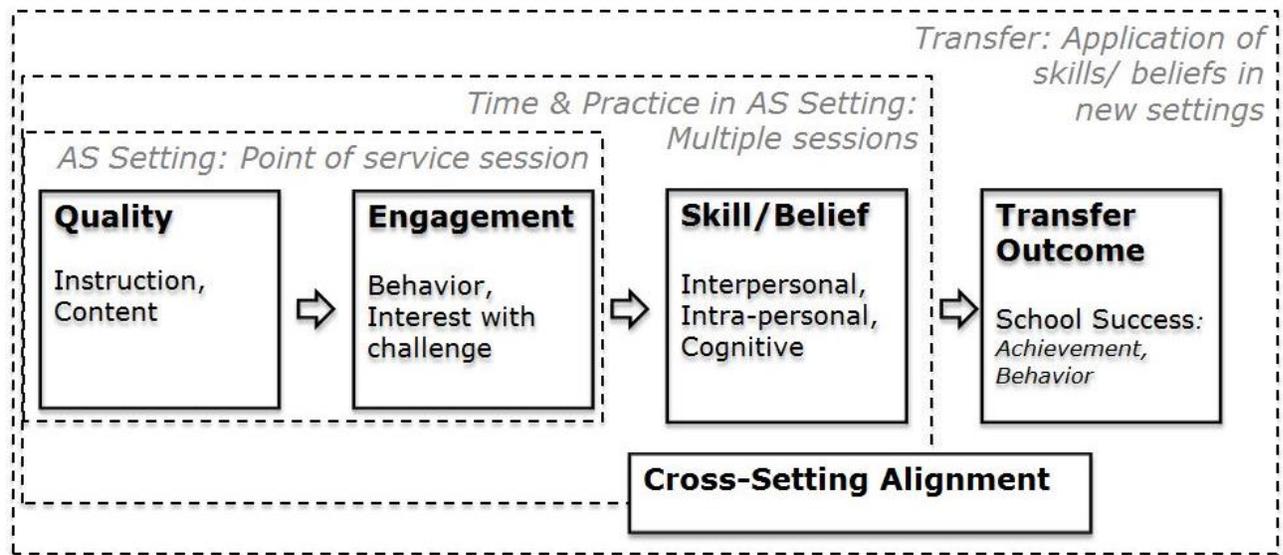




ABOUT THE CHILD TRENDS STUDENT SURVEY ELEMENTARY VERSION

According to the Quality-to-Outcomes theory of change (shown below in Figure 1), regular participation in high-quality youth development programs helps young people to build the skills and dispositions critical to success in school, work, and life.ⁱ



Smith C., Hallman, S., Hillaker, B., Sugar, S., McGovern, G., & Devaney, E. (2012). *Development and early validation evidence for an observational measure of high quality instructional practice for science, technology, engineering and mathematics in out-of-school time settings: The STEM supplement to the Youth Program Quality Assessment*. Forum for Youth Investment. Washington DC.

FIGURE 1: QUALITY TO OUTCOMES THEORY OF CHANGE

ABOUT THE CHILD TRENDS STUDENT SURVEY

The *Child Trends Student Survey*ⁱⁱ is intended to provide programs with information on the development of select skills and dispositions in the children they serve. It includes survey scales targeting the following areas:

- Academic Self-Efficacy
- Mastery Orientation
- Persistence
- Self-Control

In addition, the survey asks children to reflect on their experiences in programs by probing their sense of belonging and general interest in program activities.

SKILLS AND DISPOSITIONS: WHAT THEY ARE, AND WHY THEY MATTER

The skills below were identified as important by Child Trends for three principle reasons: 1) they are central to the development of elementary-aged children; 2) research links them to positive outcomes, especially academic outcomes; and 3) they are malleable and can be strengthened through the intentional actions of youth programs.ⁱⁱⁱ These skills are:



ACADEMIC SELF-EFFICACY is one of several “approaches to learning” that matter to academic achievement. It is defined as the belief in one’s ability to accomplish academic tasks. Children who have strong self-efficacy beliefs try harder and are better able to persevere in the face of challenges or obstacles. Although self-efficacy is a better predictor of academic outcomes as children get older, elementary students’ efficacy beliefs can have an impact on their academic performance. Additionally, academic self-efficacy has been associated with better social and interpersonal skills in younger children.^{iv}

MASTERY ORIENTATION refers to one’s tendency to approach a learning task with the goal of improving one’s skills or growing one’s competence. This is distinct from a “performance orientation,” which is characterized by one’s tendency to approach tasks with the goal of being judged favorably by others. Children with mastery goals are more likely to embrace challenge and to try hard. They also exhibit higher levels of academic success, particularly as compared to students with a “performance-avoidance” orientation, or a tendency to shy from challenge out of fear of negative judgement.^v

PERSISTENCE relates to a child’s ability to work through challenges. Persistence has been linked to higher levels of academic achievement in both children and adults.^{vi} Persistence is both an attitude or tendency in itself, and a behavior that is reinforced by the other skills and dispositions in this framework.

SELF-CONTROL has both an emotional and a behavioral dimension. Children with good self-control can control their impulses, delay gratification, and sustain attention. They can also understand and manage feelings of anger and sadness. Self-control is critically important during the elementary school years. Early self-control has been linked to better academic, social, and emotional outcomes in adolescence and beyond.^{vii}

GUIDELINES FOR INTERPRETING SURVEY RESULTS

The use of self-report surveys for high-stakes accountability is problematic for a number of reasons. In many cases, respondents will provide answers they think are “right” rather than ones that are true. Furthermore, an individual’s frame of reference can affect his or her survey responses in unpredictable ways.^{viii} At this point, the data generated by this survey should be used for program planning and improvement purposes, and not for high-stakes decision-making. In Appendix A¹, we provide sample questions to guide interpretation of survey results. We recommend talking through survey results with staff and other stakeholders in order to derive program-relevant practice points from the data.

¹ Appendix A shows survey items by domain. Items should appear in a randomized order on both print and online versions of the survey itself.



APPENDIX A: ELEMENTARY SURVEY ITEMS BY DOMAIN

INDIVIDUAL SKILL ITEMS:

PERSISTENCE (grades 3-5):

- If I solve a problem wrong the first time, I just keep trying until I get it right
- When I do badly on a test, I work harder the next time
- I always work hard to complete my schoolwork

ACADEMIC SELF-EFFICACY (grades 3-5):

- I can do even the hardest homework
- I can learn the things taught in school
- I can figure out difficult homework

MASTERY ORIENTATION (grades 3-5):

- I do my schoolwork because I like to learn new things
- I do my schoolwork because I'm interested in it
- I do my schoolwork because I enjoy it

SELF-CONTROL (grades 3-5):

- I can wait in line patiently
- I sit still when I'm supposed to
- I can wait for my turn to talk (original question "in class;" change to "in a group")
- I can easily calm down when excited
- I calm down quickly when I get upset

PROGRAM ITEMS:

PROGRAM BELONGING AND ENGAGEMENT (grades 3-5)

- I have friends in this program
- I enjoy coming to this program most of the time
- This program helps me learn new things
- Adults in this program treat kids with respect



APPENDIX B: DATA REVIEW DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What are your initial reactions to the information?

- What do you notice first? What stands out?
- What is interesting or exciting?
- What is disappointing or frustrating?
- What are you skeptical about?

2. What does the data show?

- What results are particularly positive or make you proud?
- Which results suggest challenges or weaknesses?
- Which results affirm what you already know?
- Which results offer new information?
- Does it answer some of the questions you hoped it would answer?

3. What insights or patterns are beginning to emerge?

- What is most significant in the data?
- What are emerging patterns or key themes?
- How can you interpret the emerging themes and patterns?
- Why do these results look this way?
- What other things do you need to consider?
- What questions has this raised for you?

4. What comes next?

- What applications or action ideas has this triggered for you?
- What kinds of program changes could you make based on this information?
- What is not a priority or concern at this time?
- Who else should see this information?
- What kind of decisions should take this information into account?



ENDNOTES

ⁱ See, for example, Vandell, D. L., Reisner, E. R., & Pierce, K. M. (2007). Outcomes Linked to High-Quality Afterschool Programs: Longitudinal Findings from the Study of Promising Afterschool Programs. *Policy Studies Associates, Inc.*; Riggs, N. R., & Greenberg, M. T. (2004). After-School Youth Development Programs: A Developmental-Ecological Model of Current Research. *Clinical Child and Family Psychology Review*, 7(3).

ⁱⁱ This survey was developed by Child Trends. See Child Trends (2014). *Measuring elementary school students' social and emotional skills: Providing educators with tools to measure and monitor social and emotional skills that lead to academic success*. Retrieved from <http://www.childtrends.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/2014-37CombinedMeasuresApproachandTablepdf1.pdf>

ⁱⁱⁱ Chien, N., Harbin, V., Goldhagen, S., Lippman, L., & Walker, K. E. (2012). Encouraging the Development of Key Life Skills in Elementary School-Age Children: A Literature Review and Recommendations to the Tauck Family Foundation (Working Paper No. 2012-28) (pp. 1–11). Child Trends. Retrieved from http://www.childtrends.org/Files/Child_Trends-2012_11_01_WP_KeyLifeSkills.pdf

^{iv} Bandura, A. (1993). Perceived self-efficacy in cognitive development and functioning. *Educational psychologist*, 28(2), 117-148; Pajares, F., & Valiante, G. (1997). Influence of self-efficacy on elementary students' writing. *The Journal of Educational Research*, 90(6), 353-360.

^v Meece, J. L., Anderman, E. M., & Anderman, L. H. (2006). Classroom goal structure, student motivation, and academic achievement. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 57, 487-503; Wigfield, A., & Cambria, J. (2010). Students' achievement values, goal orientations, and interest: Definitions, development, and relations to achievement outcomes. *Developmental Review*, 30(1), 1-35.

^{vi} Li-Grining, C. P., Votruba-Drzal, E., Maldonado-Carreño, C., & Haas, K. (2010). Children's early approaches to learning and academic trajectories through fifth grade. *Developmental Psychology*, 46(5), 1062; Duckworth, A. L., Peterson, C., Matthews, M. D., & Kelly, D. R. (2007). Grit: perseverance and passion for long-term goals. *Journal of personality and social psychology*, 92(6), 1087.

^{vii} Mischel, W., Shoda, Y., & Rodriguez, M. I. (1989). Delay of gratification in children. *Science*, 244(4907), 933-938. Moffitt, T. E., Arseneault, L., Belsky, D., Dickson, N., Hancox, R. J., Harrington, H., ... & Caspi, A. (2011). A gradient of childhood self-control predicts health, wealth, and public safety. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 108(7), 2693-2698. Tangney, J. P., Baumeister, R. F., & Boone, A. L. (2004). High self-control predicts good adjustment, less pathology, better grades, and interpersonal success. *Journal of personality*, 72(2), 271-324.

^{viii} See Duckworth, A. L., & Yeager, D. S. (2015). Measurement Matters Assessing Personal Qualities Other Than Cognitive Ability for Educational Purposes. *Educational Researcher*, 44(4), 237-251, and West, M. R. (2014). The Limitations of Self-Report Measures of Non-cognitive Skills. *The Brown Center Chalkboard*. Retrieved from <http://www.brookings.edu/research/papers/2014/12/18-chalkboard-non-cognitive-west>.